

# Activist

# Emily

the  
Hysterical  
Alive

Old Hag

In Your Face  
INSATIABLE

Feminazi

Angry

Strong Woman

Bitch

RADICAL

delerious

ACADEMIC  
FREEDOM

DYKE  
MILITANT

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We can sit in our corners, mute forever while our sisters and ourselves are wasted, while our children are distorted and destroyed, while our earth is poisoned; we can sit in our safe corners mute as bottles, and we will still be no less afraid.

-Audre Lorde

## The Fabulous Gals at the Emily

The AA part of Abba  
 Adrienne Mercer  
 Anita Zaencker  
 Bindi Sandhu  
 Cara, Deborah, and Jacqueline  
 Carolynn Van de Vyvere  
 Christie Shaw  
 Deborah Thien  
 Gwendolyn Richards  
 Helen Rezanowich  
 Josephine Pattern  
 Judy MacInnes Jr.  
 Kate Campbell  
 Kelly Babcock  
 Kirsty Dickson  
 Leigh Walters  
 Mardi Douglass  
 Monique Cikaliuk  
 Nancy Paterson  
 Naomi North  
 rain heather margaret benson  
 Roberta Kennedy  
 Sandra Hoenle  
 Sarah McCourtney  
 Shawnah  
 Shelley Motz  
 Tara Sharpe  
 Theresa Newhouse  
 Women's Studies 302

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Jess Howard, Andrea Clark, Naomi North

# Election Unites Women

by Theresa Newhouse

After 12 years of civil war El Salvador is having its first democratic and open elections and women are playing an important role.

Elections for 3 levels of government were held March 20. A guarantee of fair and open elections were part of the 1992 Peace Accords signed by the government and the FMLN.

The FMLN, a leftist guerrilla group, had been fighting a war against the right-wing ARENA government party for 12 years. Since the peace accords, however, 37 FMLN members have been assassinated, some of whom were to be candidates. The elections have also not been free of abnormalities and violence.

According to Andrea Clark, an elections observer from Victoria, over 200,000 people found themselves unable to vote through war-created confusion and errors in the voting lists. Some arrived at polling stations election day to find though their names had been on the posted voters lists they were not on the list at the station, said Clark.

The elections were officiated by the Supreme Electoral Tribunal, a highly political organization appointed by the government.

Clark said a second round of



PREGUNTA: ¿POR QUÉ LA ORGANIZACIÓN DE LAS MUJERES GENERA OPINIONES CONTROVERSIAS?

R/DOCTORA CUMBIA:

Es una excelente pregunta que permite tocar diferentes temas. Estos temas pueden ir desde la historia de la participación de las mujeres en las luchas populares, por sus propias reivindicaciones

elections for presidency will be held April 24. "There will be a lot of pressure put to bear so that the next round takes place in a fair context," said Clark.

Women's groups from across El Salvador joined together and wrote a Salvadorean Women's Platform for the elections. From diverse political backgrounds including both ARENA and FMLN women, they agreed upon 14 points for women's liberation including:

- an end to incest, rape and sexual harassment
- land, credit, and technical assistance for women
- free and voluntary motherhood
- end to increasing costs of

basic goods

-50% of political positions designated for women

With pressure from women, this platform was endorsed by both ARENA and the FMLN.

The women's movement in El Salvador has also played an important role educating women about women's issues and women's history. A regular women-only newspaper column, uses a caricature of various stereotypical Salvadorean women named Dra. Cumbia to answer women's questions.

Clark said the women found the humour of using a cartoon character an important outreach tool in their education work. \*

## On about language and Self made self

Don't stop or you will never speak again or maybe you won't be allowed to speak once you've started or perhaps just keep speaking to acknowledge that that is your voice/my voice to hear it without stopping, to KNOW and HEAR your voice, don't stop or pause or you/i will cease to exist. One long burst of she-ality in the face of silence and invisibility we/i seek and hate. CAN YOU HEAR/SEE ME NOW DO I NEED CAPITALS and nations to be seen. Do i need to throw over the malestream/ speak to be seen, to see myself, to be heard, to be acknowledged? Do i need to rip and tear and do as U/male-construct do/are doing? U, the unconnected circle, the unfinished O/whole do not see female. The dead woman you constructed externally and internally, U 'give' me language saying, use it, speak, "tell me what's wrong". U don't connect my she-ality. i don't have words but i will make them from my body and provide a context with my spirit. My body that which is female and of another but not other, my spirit disowned in the first words but never defeated, the strength of the Female is hidden in the feminine, frail, petite defining of women.

It is as if one has to turn the world inside out to see what one cannot see because women's oppressions are so everyday and "ordinary". We are excluded from our own reality. Mankind - which is not even kind to man - does not include Woman. Self defined reality is difficult to find in the internal Self.

Perhaps fe-male - the male that suckles - can begin to hear, to understand a description of her Self through liturgist ends, memorizing our bodies and mythologizing these litanies in a way of being entirely Self-defined. Once defined and refined, intuned with body, expressing Self spirit, women may reject and eject oppressive symbols, myths and realities that form internal walls - the "I am not good enough", the "I could never be as strong as she is" walls - which are litanies that construct the female as feminine and do not define the inner Self missing from language (what word to use for female? I search still but am not still in my search). Space is now made from new myths, new Self ideologies. Self made woman is demonstrating her Self in strong words and she unleashes torrents of demonstrable strength in radical ways.

Consider this a missive, a description and attempt to link visible and invisible bonds, which, in the act of narrating is RADICAL (thank you Toni Morrison) and which attempts to break the magic, the control, the bondage of language that erases and eradicates. The Fe-male - that which is not male, that which is other but not of another - that which is 'it' and which is not at all, is described in the visionary, the RADICAL ways of being. Choose a weapon of disorder, fantasize, make your own myth or/and revel in the myths of other women. Abandon the implied coherence in which women live and dance into being our uncommon features. by Shawnah

## To The Bastard Outside My Window Thursday Night.

Did You enjoy it?  
 Fucking yourself.  
 Running.  
 Leaving your semen on my window.  
 I won't clean it up.

Only 12 pounds of pressure,  
 I tell myself.

Only 12 pounds of pressure  
 to lift a heavy pot off the stove  
 or rip your testicles off.  
 "Just twist and shout,"  
 my Wenlido instructor said.

Twist and fucking shout,  
 you bastard.  
 Jacking off, track pants down.  
 Your pathetic phallus  
 thrusting at my window,  
 an image I can't escape.  
 Your cock thrusting,  
 like I can taste it,  
 down my throat. Your cock  
 and I don't want it.  
 I don't want it.

But what I hate most  
 is your insistent knocking -  
 once, twice, three times.  
 Your fucking command  
 that I see you, that I respond  
 because it's what you need  
 to get off.

You compel me to be the victim  
 I've never wanted to be.  
 I never will be.

So here it is,  
 the best I can do:  
 approximate height,  
 age,  
 hair colour,  
 flaccid penis in hand.

by Shelley Marie Motz

**Fiddleheads**  
Cafe • Bakery

Women Owned and Run  
 Funky Vegetarian Cafe  
 Wildly Delicious Food  
 Located in the Heart of  
 Fernwood Village  
 128D Gladstone Street  
 386-1199

# Women Beware Post-Rape Assault

not quite two months ago, I was raped by two men.

one had a gun. I didn't know the masked assailants by face. I only knew what they did to me. I had been receiving strange and sometimes threatening letters at my place of work for some time. I didn't keep the letters, it was too scary to let them exist. but I kept one.

on the day of the rape, I stopped by a police station to ask what I should do about the letters. the disinterested officer asked if I had them. no, not with me. just wait until you get another one, then come back was his answer. shrug.

I didn't get another letter that day I got raped.

you know the stats: chances are 1 out of 4, even higher for university or college women. I hate the stats, I hate rape. we live in a rapist society.

I've been raped before, but this time was different. I wasn't going to internalize this one. I went to the police. big mistake, I

should have known that the police, the police system, raped too.

so I go through it all again.

Just walk through it, show us where and how it happened. I know this is hard for you, especially just a couple hours after it happened. this is what the two male officers tell me. fuck them, looking at me like I am lying... walking along, approached from behind, two men, masks, rubber gloves, gun, bash my head on the wall, razor blade across my hand and face, rip my clothes ... yes, intercourse,

briefly ... and a knife. more slamming my head against the wall.

unconscious, just momentarily ... I

know it's strange. not the way this

normally happens? is this normal?

why didn't I report this to campus

police?

what?! you think I actually want to be telling you fuckers any of this? maybe if

you didn't smile at me like I'm messed up, like I'm lying.

at the public safety building, it takes

almost two hours to get a statement on

paper.

then there were the photos. turn to the side. extend your right arm. is that all? all of your injuries? do we need one of (points to my crotch)? no, that's fine.

gee thanks.

midnight or so and we're at the hospital. I'm stiff and the smell of police officer number one's kentucky fried take out flesh makes me wretch.

waiting and waiting in the waiting room until 2am. officers everywhere, staring and joking about all the

"drunken Indians", regulars, who come in, beaten, bloody, bruised. it feels like blood is everywhere, smells like rotting flesh.

but I'm fine, I just want to see a doctor and get out of here.

a nurse comes, she's a woman. finally.

she does an internal (no lubrication - sorry, I know this is uncomfortable), takes hair samples, other samples, head x-rays, says she knows how hard this is.

but she looks at me oddly. how is my blood pressure? normal. normal? she looks at me oddly.

maybe rapes's not the hardest part. just wait until the morning after.

it's 4am, the police drop me off to sleep at a friend's house, she knows, she always knows. she holds me.

11am, the phone is for me. detective so and so and some other officer want me to go with them to the public safety building. they'll come get me. at the place they lock me into this room. I smile. they smirk back.

now we understand that some women do this for attention, or because they're lonely or for other reasons ... make up a story about being sexually assaulted. it is our belief that what you reported last night did not occur. is this true? this will all be very easy on you if you just tell us now that you made it all up, maybe you're having trouble dealing with other things...

fuck, can this be true? what do I say? I know the police, they won't leave me alone

until I say I lied. I can't prove it. I can't prove anything and I can't bear any more doubting, mocking questions.

I can't look at them. I just murmur. yes, I made it all up. why? for attention.

a statement? yes, I understand that what I say can be used in court. I understand that you're an asshole. for attention? like what? being condescended to? being dragged *üü* over the place, talking to strangers about having a knife poked inside me? humiliating myself because I don't know what the hell else to do? I just wanted to get out of this, I thought lying would be the easiest way.

but I can't fight their lies with more of my own. big mistake - trusting rapists.

how did I get these scratches? Oh, I did it myself of course. and, oh yes, I ripped my own pants too. why? to make it look like something had happened of course. the bruise on the side of my head? how do I explain that? um, I fell. yeah, I fell on this post thing.

whatever. they don't mention the letters. I guess I must have made up all that too. just come back if you get another one.

you should get a lawyer. i'm sure the judge will be easy on you, this is your first offense after all.

we're here to deal with bad people, and we don't think you're a bad person. you just made a mistake.

yeah, right. the mistake was calling the

police. 911 is a joke.haha ha. police are good for one thing - dealing with dead bodies. yeah, well when the war on women is over and the casualties are ready to be tagged and disposed of we'll get back to you.

I get escorted home by joe cop. nice guy, tells me that no one will find out about this, so I shouldn't worry.

in the next couple of days the papers scream lies at me.

**"Faker cries Rape."** I don't even realize it until I read the papers, that the door was locked because I'm the criminal. being raped and scared and quietly desperate is my crime.

if only I had been stronger. I still don't know what to do. just no more silence.

and I realize that this is not just about me. this is us, this is women under siege. this is all fucked up

I am summoned to appear in court on 18 March 1994. my lawyer says we have a good chance. i still get scared sometimes, remembering nameless, faceless men. I cry a lot. I don't care about being careful anymore, sometimes. but I am living everyday. I'm not hiding. there isn't anywhere to hide. and rape isn't always the worst part. or maybe it's just everywhere. you know the stats: chances are 1 out of 4, even higher for university or college women. \*

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## Respecting Diversity/ Protecting Human Rights

by Bindu Sandhu

Jan Goodwin,  
*The Price of Honour*,  
Little, Brown & Company, 1994.

In 1993, Canada made history by granting political asylum to a young Saudi woman on the basis of "gender persecution" in her home country. The "Nada" decision generated much controversy. At best, gender persecution was characterized by some commentators as a weak and unfounded ground for claiming refugee status. Indeed, the refugee and immigration commissioner who denied Nada's first application for asylum stated in his rejection that "she should comply with the laws of the country that she criticizes..."

Religious fundamentalism has always posed a threat to any rights and freedoms gained by women. In *Price of Honour*, journalist Jan Goodwin uncovers shocking accounts of religious fundamentalism in the Middle East and its stifling effect on Muslim through a combination of statistics and personal accounts, vividly portrays the type of harsh social and religious climate under which these women attempt to function. It is a disturbing portrayal of how religion is often manipulated by those in power to further personal and political objectives.

The chapter on Saudi Arabia is especially informative for those who are unclear as to why Nada would feel persecuted in Saudi Arabia because of her gender. The following are just a few examples of the types of laws in effect in that country:

-A woman may not travel (even within Saudi Arabia) without a male relative.

-Women cannot swim in public or hotel pools.

-Morality police rigorously discipline "improperly dressed" women (those not covered head to toe).

-Scholarships for Saudi women to study

abroad are banned.

-A woman who is in labour must have a marriage certificate before being admitted to a hospital, or the police will be informed. If a woman has an illegitimate child, she suffers the penalty of 90 or more lashes.

-Women may not mix with men in any public place, or in the workplace.

-It is illegal for single women to live alone.

-It is illegal for Saudi women to drive.

-Women are not permitted to attend mosques, except during Ramadan, when they must sit at the back.

The rest of the book is equally disturbing. In Iraq rape cases, the man is obliged to

marry his victim. If she is married, he must pay compensation to her husband. The older the victim the higher the sum. In Iran, the penalty for not being properly covered is 1-12 months in prison and/or flogging.

Faced with such blatant abuses of basic human rights, Goodwin nevertheless manages to remain fairly objective and separate her personal values from the analysis. She skilfully manages to weave together the background of complicated Middle East politics with its effect on the life of the average Muslim woman. For Gulf war buffs, she offers a different perspective on the war and goes behind the glamorous images of pre-war Kuwaiti life. For women, perhaps the greatest value of *Price of Honour* is the encouragement to examine critically the history and philosophy behind their particular religion, rather than trustingly accepting oppressive and false male interpretations.

Goodwin's analysis is particularly relevant to a multicultural society such as Canada. *Price of Honour* raises broader questions as to how we should strike the balance between respecting the religious and cultural beliefs of "ethnic" communities, and recognizing when those beliefs have little value other than to oppress and subjugate women. \*

## Friday Night at Foul Bay and Fort

Do you know how it feels  
to be patted on the head even though you are nearly six feet tall?  
to be called sweets honey baby sexy  
by men who don't know your first name or your last name or  
your lasting impression of them, grim,  
slim chance you'll ever consider them part of the human race?

Do you know how it feels  
to be nearly six feet tall and then feel immobilized by a pat on the head  
normal reactions of anger who the hell do you think you are  
become confused in appropriateness and you respond with a shrill giggle uncertainty  
suddenly afraid to move frozen to your spot in the liquor store staring  
at a row of expensive red wines?  
She's tall eh Jim  
and then that hand on my head touching my hair ruffling my hair my scalp is a thousand  
bells and whistles shrieking don't touch me take it Off Off Off.

Do you know how it feels  
to be reduced to the she impersonal even as they stick their fingers into your personal?  
How the anger catches up to you and your hand tightens  
on the neck of the bottle and your arm wants to swing and strike?  
How it is a heavy weight and you are suddenly aware of its possibilities?  
Do you know how it is to buy a bottle of red wine on a Friday night?  
No big deal right?

Deborah Thien

How did she find it on the runway?

# Mother Tongue

by Roberta Kennedy

About two years ago, I was studying Sylvia Plath in an English class. I vividly remember a very young, childless woman saying how selfish she thought Plath was. We were discussing Plath's poem "Tulips" in her book Ariel:

"The tulips are too red in the first place, they hurt me."

Even through the gift paper I could hear them breathe.

Lightly, through their white swaddlings, like an awful baby."

The young, childless woman firmly stated how selfish Plath was for having expressed these negative thoughts about her helpless baby. She said that she had no sympathy for Plath in any way because of how heartless she was. I wish I weren't so stupid and shy. I had plenty to say in response to this and yet my mouth remained shut. You see, I'm a mother of three, and I know what selfish little beings babies can be.

It's a shock when you have your first baby. Everything revolves around the baby. Sleepless nights and sleepless days go on until you feel that you will die from lack of sleep. The baby may cry and cry and cry and cry no matter what you do to try and comfort her/him. You can feed, burp, change diaper, swaddle snugly in a blanket and pace the floor while singing endless lullabies. You feel like hell. If your baby doesn't stop crying, you may get to the point where you feel like sending her/him back.

You don't get time to shower, dress, brush teeth or even feed yourself. You are totally house-bound. If you do want to go out, it will take a good couple of hours even to get ready. You have to feed the baby, dress the baby, dress yourself, eat if you have time, change another diaper, gather baby stuff for the diaper bag and strap the baby in a safety seat and go. By the time you arrive at your destination, you may have to feed the baby again. It is an exhausting job.

The baby is totally dependent on you, the mother, and no one else. Even the father is not enough. Even if he wants to help, he cannot breastfeed. New babies need to be near the mother. They need to nurse, or just smell her breastmilk nearby. You may spend all day holding the baby whether the baby is

nursing or not. The father experiences few interruptions when the first baby comes into the couple's life. He may be willing to help, but his help is limited in regards to tending the baby. Of course he can do other things, like the laundry and cooking. But, the mother may feel resentment towards him because he can shower, dress, eat and brush his teeth everyday. He can leave the house whenever he wants, without diaper bags, a baby in tow. Yes, I realize that the father is out working so that the family can keep a roof over their heads, and food in the fridge and cupboards. At least he can leave his job at the end of the day; the mother cannot.

It is no wonder that Plath says, "like an awful baby." With a new baby, a woman may feel trapped,

fed. Just because I sometimes get upset that their needs usually come first and think them "awful babies," doesn't mean I don't love my children. It does mean that I would like some time for just myself. I would like to get something done in one sitting, without any interruptions.

Perhaps this is what Plath means when she says her husband's and child's smiles were like hooks. Or when she said the tulips are "like an awful baby." Plath is in the hospital and her family still torments her. Perhaps this was the only rest she got.

Her poem "Morning Song" describes a birth of a baby, maybe her own. She writes, "the midwife slapped your footsoles, and your bald cry/Took its place among the elements." It could very well be that her third suicide attempt (which she mentions elsewhere in the book) occurs after the birth of her baby. This would indicate that Plath was experiencing post-partum depression. This depression accompanies the birth of a baby and is usually evident with uncontrollable outbreaks of tears, a feeling of helplessness, low self-worth, a longing for times before the baby and sometimes, suicidal thoughts or attempts. The length of this depression depends on the support (or lack, thereof) that the woman receives. Having a new baby is an overwhelming experience. It totally changes your life. Perhaps Plath felt this with her writing especially. I'm sure it made her depressed thinking about the little time she had to spend on it. It makes me depressed.

I'm a stay-at-home mom after graduating with my Bachelor of Arts last year. I spend most of my time worrying about household stuff. Getting breakfast, lunch, supper, doing dishes, laundry and grocery shopping take up my days. My house is never clean enough, there is never enough clean laundry, it's almost never put away neatly in its drawers, my kids are ever hungry (and there is nothing I hate more than cooking supper). Plath writes in the same poem that her "husband and child smiling out of the family photo;/Their smiles catch onto my skin, little smiling hooks." They are something she just can't shake off. They stick in her and hurt. They make demands on her and on her time. As I write this, my 2 year old is playing horsie on my legs and pushing

my pen away, demanding my complete attention. My 5 and 6 year olds are demanding to be

and that her life will never be the same again. In fact it isn't, but at least as time goes on, you get more sleep. The little ones grow less dependent on you — but still dependent.

You know, child rearing wasn't always a solo job. Many aboriginal peoples raised their children communally. The babies didn't only belong to the parents, but to their aunts, uncles, cousins, grandparents, great-grandparents. Everyone would tend to the baby when the parents couldn't comfort her/him. I'm sure this was less stressful on the parents. If Plath received support like this, maybe she never would have attempted suicide and eventually succeeded later in her life.

I don't see Plath as a horrible selfish person like the young woman from my class did. I am totally sympathetic towards her. She was a tired mother and wife who just could not give of herself anymore.\*



## Re/membering Emily McGuire

My dress is hanging on the bookshelf frame  
gauze weighted like lead  
once, I danced  
swirled under spotlights with you  
a displaced angel  
swooping past the grave  
of her child-body

Where shall I wear it now?  
Is the music still playing  
in an old picture-show?  
We have learned new words  
but the steps, oh  
the steps are the same

Fifty years with you,  
you bastard  
in your old man socks  
while I watched everything happen  
my arms elbow deep  
in whatever I was scrubbing  
at the time

My dress smells of moth balls  
brand new, decaying  
only once, in the folds of its arms  
did I dance  
for you.

by Adrienne Mercer



## They never came back diner

They never came back for seconds  
Those men  
Fed well  
Fed up  
I have served  
Myself  
Eaten raw  
Cringed fear of angry words deeds  
Fresh meat on the patriarchal plate

They never came back  
Those men  
Passed through  
My life  
My bedroom  
My legs  
My lips  
What am I feeding  
That would eat me  
Smiling,  
"You're so sweet"

Another nation  
Exporting raw resources  
Precious and precocious  
Importing foreign currency  
There is no exchange  
Your currency is worthless at this diner  
The waitress hasn't fed her self

by Shawnah

Were the Wonder Twins in therapy for their codependent tendencies?

by Carolyn Van de Vyvere

On March 14th, Makeda Silvera packed Everywoman's books for a reading from her new collection of short stories, *Her Head A Village*.

Silvera's reading was animated, drawing her audience into the lives of the different narrators of her stories.

Silvera wore the words of many speakers. She read as a Caribbean girl silenced about incest, as a young Caribbean Canadian woman discovering her sexuality, as a Caribbean lesbian writer, struggling with the different aspects of her identity.

She draped us with these different stories, illuminating the commonality in the outsider status experienced by each of the narrators.

An examination of the position of 'outsider' is a theme which runs throughout much of Silvera's work. As a working class, Caribbean lesbian in Canada, Silvera has had much experience with being an outsider. Through her writing, and her work as the co-founder of Sister Vision: Black women and Women of Colour Press, Silvera has been working to create space for herself and for other women who are defined as 'other' by society.

"I write to get a better understanding of self and of environment and of people around me," said Silvera. "Also of family and also of the African Community, and also of the larger community."

"I think one [barrier] on a personal level, which every writer goes through is just learning how to take yourself really seriously, and particularly as a woman. This is certainly not the kind of profession that one is encouraged to take on by your parents and also those close to you."

"In a lot of ways, [writing] is

the kind of profession where you have to make that room, you have to take that space, which means that sometimes you have to be selfish. Particularly if you are a woman with other kinds of responsibilities, like parenting or other such delights.

"The second point brings in the whole question and notion of race and also ethnicity, which can and do sometimes act as a barrier to getting established. One is already marginalized if one is of Black or African descent, not really taken seriously. There is again this whole notion that your writing is not

marketable. So there are always barriers."

Much of what Silvera writes has a strong presence of history, working class and family.

"That's what I mean when I say that I write to better understand those things," said Silvera, "So much of that is lost, and so much of it just gets buried, because particularly as an African Canadian woman there isn't a lot of us that is writing and there isn't a lot of books out there that is telling about our specific history and our specific experience as people living in Canada."

"That was important for me to

begin to make those kinds of connections, and begin to dig up a lot of that history that gets buried and sometimes gets buried even by family and that particular community. Possibly things that they don't really want to talk about or to disclose.

"The main reason why we co-

try to deny some of the experiences that were very real for us as [women of colour] living in Canada.

"Founding the press came out of all that kind of experience: to have a press controlled by women of colour who very much knew that experience and would [not allow our voices] to be silenced or changed.

Silvera said her experience of moving from Jamaica to Toronto when she was 13 has heavily impacted her writing, particularly her newest book.

"Most of the stories

deal with the character as 'outsider,' not belonging anywhere. And that certainly has been very much my experience moving here at that particular age, age 13, to a new country, where things are just so very different.

"One of the most striking thing was coming from a country where your population is African population and moving to Canada. That was totally different. And trying to grapple with a new school system, and really finding no sense of self anywhere, in any of the books. No sense of any kind of history, except by omission that you are just not good enough to be in any of the books....

"[Searching for self] was something really urgent that (I) had to do. (I find myself) through exploration and writing and also through reading. I really had to sit back and think about the kind of environment I grew up in, where I had so much joy and so much confidence.

"Then, what happened? (I) came to Canada. There was that search again to deal with dislocation, alienation. To deal with ones status as an outsider.

"It was through a lot of these processes that one begins to find self and to know self and become really grounded. That's what I mean when I say that I write very much for me. Certainly not in an airy fairy way, but in just trying to make sense of the world that I live in and trying to understand my location within that world.

Silvera also described her conception of 'home.'

"I certainly don't think of home as a physical space. I imagine that that has a lot to do with my experience. I mean, I find home is inside of me, and sometimes it's okay and sometimes it isn't. And then, sometimes home is with the other person that I share my life with."

"I do go back to the Caribbean and there are things that I like about it, because though I've been away for a long time, still, there are things that are familiar. I still have some roots there. I still have some family there."

"But again, because I left such a long time [ago], I could never say that it is really home, because

there I am also a foreigner, because I don't live there.

Silvera has also participated in some of the Canadian feminist writers' conferences in the early eighties.

"At that first conference, the first Women and Words in 1983, I was one of the keynote speakers," said Silvera. "There were three or four of us. That conference was really quite good in a lot of ways for me. It was very empowering. It was women coming together, talking about writing and talking about differences.

"It did help to give me confidence to write, to say, 'hey, I can do it - I can write'.

"Though there was also a lot of problems with the conference itself in terms of the whole issue of race and ethnicity.

"There were very few [women of colour] there. That was one of the problems, and also that quite a number of women who were involved in the conference weren't willing to listen, to hear.

"I remember, in my keynote speech, the organizers had told us what we should speak on. All four of the keynote speakers had to address the question, 'How far have we come'.

"The majority of the women who spoke said 'Yah, we have come a really far way, and things are really great and things are really wonderful.'

"So I went up and I said 'Well, we really haven't'. I spoke specifically about my experience as a black woman. [I spoke], I think, very honestly and very bravely about some of the issues that white women had to look at.

"[And I said] when you are in a feminist group, you can't keep cutting off talking about race. The same thing also happens in our communities. That you are black but you can't talk about feminism. That was the point that I was trying to make and they just wouldn't have it. They were upset for days after. It was amazing."

Silvera also recently edited an anthology by lesbians of colour called *Piece of My Heart*.

"It took about three or four years to actually get it to a publication stage," said Silvera. "When we started out the press, *Piece of My Heart* was something that I really wanted to do, that I wanted for so many reasons.

"One was just the lack of visibility of lesbians of colour, and again, this whole notion that there are no lesbians of colour.

"So, I started out in 1986 trying to get contributors, and it was extremely difficult to find women of colour who would put their names in print, for I guess a lot of obvious reasons, given that they have to go back into their communities and they have to work in their communities."

"It was really hard to get works and I put away the project for a while and then I started up again. This time I decided that I would also open it up to women in the United States because at that time there was also no books at all that had works by and about women of colour who were lesbians."

"I did it by word of mouth and also by putting ads in every single magazine, every single journal, forcing people to write. It seemed to work. It was really a labour of love, but it was a lot of work."

## Coming Home



# Writing Women In

by Tara Sharpe

On Friday, March 18th, six women gave this campus a blast of literary culture.

The Thank Gawd It's Friday Reading Series was sponsored by the Department of Creative Writing, and was orchestrated by two women within the department: Lorna Crozier and Judy MacInnes. Jr. Gail Anderson-Dargatz and Anne Swannell drew the weekly Creative Writing readings to a close last Friday.

The first reader was Dargatz, a graduate of the Creative Writing program. She won the 1993 CBC Literary competition with her story, "The Girl with the Bell Necklace," now published in *Frictions II*.

Dargatz is also famous for her comic cow stories, written while at university in "reaction to the stick-in-your-throat stories (she had) been writing."

Dargatz's success was swift after graduation and, as Crozier stated, "quite stunning." Douglas & McIntyre is releasing her short fiction collection, *The Miss Hereford Stories*, this fall, followed by a novel next spring.

Dargatz read a short piece, "A Golden Hemorrhoid" from

this compilation. The tone is richly humorous with a lightning honesty.

The speaker is a 13-year-old male struggling with the onset of "wet dreams and jerking off". In a weird twist of logic, and the speakers continuous presence around a farm, Dargatz connects masturbation with a prolapsed calf rectum: "If I did that too much, would

*Women gave this campus a blast of literary culture...*

my rectum prolapse?"

A bright pivot in this piece is the introduction of a female character: the speaker's teacher.

The teacher changes her appearance constantly, in the guise of a wig. On the days she is blonde, she is "perky and pleasant" and talks of her mother making pudding on a wood stove. On the days when she is a brunette, she "carries a yardstick" and talks of her father, a sergeant from the war with shrapnel in his head. The listener could hope that Dargatz is bringing up these stereotypes here to attack them.

Swannell, also a graduate of the department, read from her book of poetry on the West

Edmonton Mall. She held this volume, *Mall*, in her hand with a vibrant purple cover facing the audience.

Swannell is also an artist, and created the cover concept herself. In the back sanctions of this collection, Phyllis Web, another B.C. poet and artist, writes that the collection is "social comedy and cultural critique...Astringent as lemonade...A truly subversive book."

The poems Swannell read are caustic sketches rather than congratulatory comment. The voice is sardonic: malls are places where "we are all perfectly safe."

In "Busy as a Beaver," Swannell investigates the currency that runs the whole enterprise: "(the beaver) made those who built Canada rich, / still does... (malls cost) twenty-two billion nickles, / each with a beaver on its back, / a busy little silver ghost."

In "Where the T in Market and the Cross are One," deity enters with a comic vengeance: God is in a workshop called "Accepting Praise Graciously."

Swannell writes that "God spends too much time in shopping malls." This does not help...

*continued on page 12*

Did Ernie and Bert push their beds together after the lights went out?

# WOMEN R

## Speaking the Language

by Monique Cikaliuk

I used to speak the language of patriarchy. Outrageously, I am still forced to speak the language as I reflect on the process of writing an anti-harassment guidebook for the university.

### *Am I providing false hope and expectations to women and other oppressed groups...?*

With empty pockets and a strong sense of idealism, I set out this past year to write a plain English guidebook on UVic's anti-harassment policy. Yet as I breathe a sigh of relief since it is almost finished, I am still caught in the turmoil which plagued me during this entire process. It can be summed up as a healthy dose of paranoia about being drawn into the dragon with just a teeny sword to protect me.

The angst about my writing the guidebook stems from these concerns: Am I providing false hope and expectations to women and other oppressed groups about the university's policy? Am I doing a disservice by further naming the experiences of far too many students, staff and faculty? Is any change going to come about having definitions and examples of harassment circulating?

In writing this guidebook, I was limited by resolution mechanisms that have been set in place for this university. Up till now this has meant an individualistic-innocent till proven guilty model with the person who has been harassed having to prove this harassment, typically in the face of vast power differences.

As I sat at the computer pecking out phrases and examples of harassment, I seriously began wondering what the hell did I think I was doing? Surely nothing constructive could come out of a policy that demanded the twisting and confining of women's experiences into a neat and tidy abstract model of dispute resolution.

What about the subjective feelings and fall-out from being harassed? Where did that fit into this policy? What about the fear of retaliation for speaking out? What about the power of language and the difficulty of shifting between the legal discourse of the policy and the reality of women's experiences? Being harassed and choosing to file a complaint, as many can tell you, is an emotionally, physically and spiritually exhaustive procedure with no guarantee of resolution since President Strong can overturn decisions made by the Anti-Harassment Advisors (which he did).

Feeling thoroughly disgusted at myself for having actively sought out this job, I pulled Audre Lorde's Sister/Outsider from the bookshelf and began reading. Suddenly, Audre's words leapt off the page: "In the transformation of silence into language and action, it is vitally necessary for each one of us to... examine her function in that transformation and to recognize her role as vital within that transformation".

Yes, this was it! The tumultuous emotions I experienced ranged from fear that I had somehow 'sold-out' for a lousy dollar to the genuine excitement that this guidebook was long overdue and I was a part of fixing this omission.

On the upside of this pendulum, we as the members of the Equal Rights and Opportunities Committee, met almost daily this past summer to redraft the harassment policy. Driven by the Chilly Climate Committee's report and the Political Science department's refusal to work with it, we drafted a new section to the Harassment Policy.

The Chilly Climate section, as it is titled, (at which President Strong balked and wanted changed since it is "just too political", but we refused) is the first of its kind in Canada. It is a way to use a non-individualistic framework for instances of harassment when it is really the sum of attitudes and practices which create an intimidating, hostile or offensive learning or working environment. This more systemic approach will take a pro-active role instead of relying on the most vulnerable to confront the nearly invincible.

On the downside of this pendulum, Dr. Strong's (mis)handling of the Berger-Bilson report provokes a strong skeptical reaction about changing anything at UVic. It is at moments like this that I wonder how I could ever be sooo naive

and live to tell about it. Okay, I did not expect the report to be super progressive but I did expect that after having spent \$150,000 on it, the recommendations would be taken seriously and implemented.

Yet Dr. Strong's press release of Feb 2 in which he states that "the working and learning environment in the Political Science department is a positive and supportive one" erodes any (mis)impression that sexism is taken seriously by this administration. These statements make a mockery of the countless hours of work done by students, staff, and faculty to bring this campus into the twentieth century.

I worry that I have been tricked by the public-relations dragon to churn out a guidebook that will become part of a public relations scam. But then I look around at students, faculty, and staff distinguished by gender, race, ethnicity, class and sexual orientation and hope that by naming some of our experiences we have the strength to work towards changing them. And I hope that this guidebook will encourage those being harassed to break the silence and speak out.

This particular experience has strengthened my belief that legally sanctioned avenues of redress-while necessary-are not any easier, more valid or credible. They are just one more avenue on an ever-changing map. \*

## Ultimate Offence

by Mardi Douglass

I went to visit the head of Intramural Sports at the University of Victoria in early September, 1993. I hoped to inquire about Ultimate Frisbee which had recently become such a popular sport. We discussed co-ed requirements (how many men:women on a particular team) as well as my concerns regarding the poor representation of women in co-ed sports. He said:

"I don't understand women...now don't take offence to this but I just don't understand. You give women an aerobics class where they can put dental floss up their butts and they show up for every class, why not anything else?!"

Of course you don't understand you moron and YES I DO TAKE OFFENCE!

On the evening of March 14, 1994, one of the three nights a week that the Ultimate Club requires the key to the soccer lights, I was again sharply offended by the sexist comments made by one of the heads of staff at Athletics and Recreation.

"Listen little lady, don't come in here with that kind of attitude, the key is gone and now I have to go over to Traffic and Security for another one. Its gonna cost me fifty bucks which means its gonna cost you fifty bucks."

It seems the one and only key to the soccer lights had gone missing the night before and because of this Mr. Athletics and Rec. figured it was his responsibility to demean and offend the woman who had calmly requested the key.

Following this insult, which left me cringing, two male members of our club went into the McKinnon Gym to further inquire about the key. The two men suggested to Mr. Athletics and Rec., that it was perhaps his address of "little lady" which had stimulated her "attitude".

"Well what the hell should I have called her...a BITCH or a split-tail?" was his reply. Twenty minutes later the lights went on.

The comments of these two men, both in positions to determine Athletics and Rec. policy, have made me angry. It is very exhausting for women to break into an arena that is dominated by men especially when socialized assumptions about physical strength are involved. I do not truly blame the individual male members of any co-ed sports club for their sexism or ignorance but rather those responsible for the organization of institutionalized Physical Education programs. I am angry that men such as Mr. Athletics and Rec. and Mr. Intramural Sports and their blatant sexist attitudes are determining the athletic policies at UVic. Please don't be silenced or discouraged from physical activity by the chilly cloud which appears over Athletics and Rec. I would like to encourage any and all women to join and enjoy co-ed sports and to assure you all of support. \*

# THE CHILL

How friendly was the Friendly Giant with the rooster and Rusty?

# RESPOND TO

## *Defining the Cold Front*

by Sandra Hoenle

The chilly climate has become a shorthand way of referring to attitudes, beliefs and practices that are at best unwelcoming and at worst hostile towards, and even dangerous to, non straight/non-white/non-male members of the university community. The chilly climate results from prejudices and discriminatory practice on both the individual and institutional level.

The chilly climate denotes an atmosphere that more or less effectively "freezes out" those who are not accepted as full and valuable members of the university community. This lack of acceptance is determined by perceptions of gender, sexual identity, physical ability or membership in particular racial, ethnic, religious or cultural groups. Further, the work done by these people is devalued, particularly if their work focuses on marginalized groups or is conducted from a standpoint that is feminist or has its origins in a culture that is not western European/North American.

Most often the chilly climate refers to women's experience on campus. Often their work, especially if it is conducted from a feminist viewpoint, is believed to be unscholarly. If it centres on the study of women or women's issues, their research is devalued by considering it to be a form of community service rather than research which furthers knowledge...

The disabled and members of various racial, ethnic, religious or cultural backgrounds are also faced with problems of (climate). Physical disability leaves many people wondering whether the person's mental capabilities are capable of functioning in a university environment.

People with physical features considered "Asian", or "Oriental" are grouped together as "Chinese". Students from this "group" are assumed to excel at math and the natural sciences, but to not really understand what is going on in class. Asian people are further stereotyped as being foreign students taking up Canadian students' places within the institution (this counts

for Canadian born Asian people since Asian always equals foreign)...

Lesbians, gays and bisexuals must also confront stereotyped expectations and often open hostility. The general assumption that everyone is heterosexual silences and excludes those who are not, and literally denies their existence.

The range of effects of a chilly climate includes feelings of discomfort, anger, depression, frustration, fear for physical safety as well as future careers. A chilly climate silences, demeans and devalues. It undermines self-confidence, dampens career aspirations and leads to exclusion and isolation. These effects can become debilitating in both the personal and professional realms and can terminate careers and result in breakdowns.

Ideally, the exchange and discussion of ideas and knowledge is what a university education is about. However, the institution has been structured to serve only certain modes of knowledge exchange thereby reducing a person's ability to get "good" marks if they don't conform to the university standards of expressing what is "knowledge".

Instead of being given the space to sharpen their intellectual abilities, people who don't conform to the university standards of an appropriate student identity are given to believe that their presence is an unwelcome intrusion, that their participation is not accepted, and that their contributions are unimportant.

It is important to realize that all of the discussed behaviours, attitudes and practices contribute to the chilly climate. It is also often not individual incidents or attitudes, but rather the cumulative effects of a wide range of factors that are devastating to students, their studies and their careers. Those who perpetuate the chilly climate are oblivious to the destructiveness of their behaviour and perceptions. The chilly climate is dismissed by most as a figment of the "radical feminist's" imagination. Until they open their eyes, there is no spring thaw in sight. \*

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### *A chilly climate silences, demeans and devalues.*

## Bundling Up for English Class?

Carolynn Van de Vyvere

Women in the English department better start wearing mittens to class. It seems that the cold front has settled in over the classes of one of the male profs in that department.

Recently, I was approached by a second year English student who was distraught over the sexist attitudes of one of her profs. She described a classroom situation which would cause anyone concerned about campus climate to shiver in their boots.

A couple of months ago, this woman was in an English class in which the students were studying an article called "Taking a Stand Against Sexism". The article discussed Harvard University's refusal to run an ad soliciting female students as models for Playboy Maga-

zine. The students were supposed to dissect the article, and decide whether or not the author had argued her point effectively.

This was not the class that ensued.

"For some reason, I don't know why (a student) had brought in a copy of the Playboy from a year when Harvard had ran the ad (for women to model for Playboy). She opened it to the page where the Ivy League section started, and put it on the prof's podium.

"Then the professor came in, and he saw the Playboy on his podium.

He just started smiling and snickering and said 'did somebody leave this?'

"He just stood there and flipped through the section on the Ivy League women and then he proceeded to pass the Playboy around the class so everyone else could look through it.

"He talked about the Playboy as if it was no big deal, like it was just a part of our culture.

When the magazine was handed to this student, she felt she could do nothing but pass it along.

"I was too angry to say anything. I didn't think that there was any way for me to say what I felt without getting mad and storming out of the classroom.

If this was not enough to make this woman feel alienated in the classroom, the professor then proceeded to explain his anti-choice position on abortion.

As a result of this professor's sexism, the student who informed me of this incident was robbed of her right to participate fully in this English class.

"The worst part" says this student "is that I need to talk to him about my paper, but I don't want to talk to him. I don't want to deal with him at all. This is affecting how I'm going to do in the class."

Those students who believe that there is no "Chilly Climate", or that the "Chilly Climate" exists only in the Political Science Department, should evaluate the climate in their own departments. For this woman, and other members of marginalized groups on campus, the Chilly Climate restricts access to their education. \*

# Y CLIMATE

# Pugfish

When your lover presses  
His palms and fingers,  
Flat and as hard as 2x4's,  
Down on your chest  
You remember the fish  
At Link Lake, the summer you were ten and a half.

His hands seem to be working  
ON you, trying to revive you  
Like a paramedic would. A few minutes  
Earlier, you were sure he was checking  
For a pulse.

And when he moves from the bed  
To the other side of the room,  
To the window sill, to the dresser and back  
To the window sill again, you remember  
The fish, the lake and also how your father  
Circles the campsite,  
Trailer full of daughters,  
Looking for a spot to spend the night.

You remember how you counted each time the car,  
Pulling the rented trailer, passed  
The woodpile: -4-5-6. And how  
Your boy cousin, Nal, sat  
Up front with your parents.  
7-8 you counted and nine  
Bucks a night for the spot  
He finally picked next to the bathrooms,  
where a shower costs  
More than a dime,  
And close to a swing-set  
Your sisters were too old to play on.

Poplars blocked your family's view of the highway.

Your lover comes back  
To the bed, stands beside it for a moment  
Before covering your body with the summer  
Bedspread and for the fifth time tonight  
He grips the dresser.

Your father did his best to circle  
Indoors, too. Pushed himself past  
Paper plates, around mosquito coil, buckets  
Of chicken, endless string clothes-lines,  
Spinning around the broken zipper of your sleeping  
Bag while your mother rested  
After a full day of travelling.

It's your lover who holds your feet  
At the ends of beds.  
After your family had dinner,  
Your sisters (with flash-  
Lights in the back of their  
Pockets) took off down to the lake  
Leaving you to watch Nal  
Fill the tires of his bicycle.

You think your father told you to leave the campsite,  
Find your sisters,  
Urged you to do something other than stare.  
So you followed your cousin to a different part  
Of Link Lake where certain birds could be  
Mistaken for your oldest sister's laughter.

Your lover is still in the room and waits  
For you to respond to his mouth, his fingers, his face.  
His face resembling Nal's  
When he reached a point in the path  
Where he could see a wooden dock  
And a boy jigging fish.  
An intent face, quick, ready to please.  
You took the line when the boy was called for  
Supper and jerked on the string as instructed.

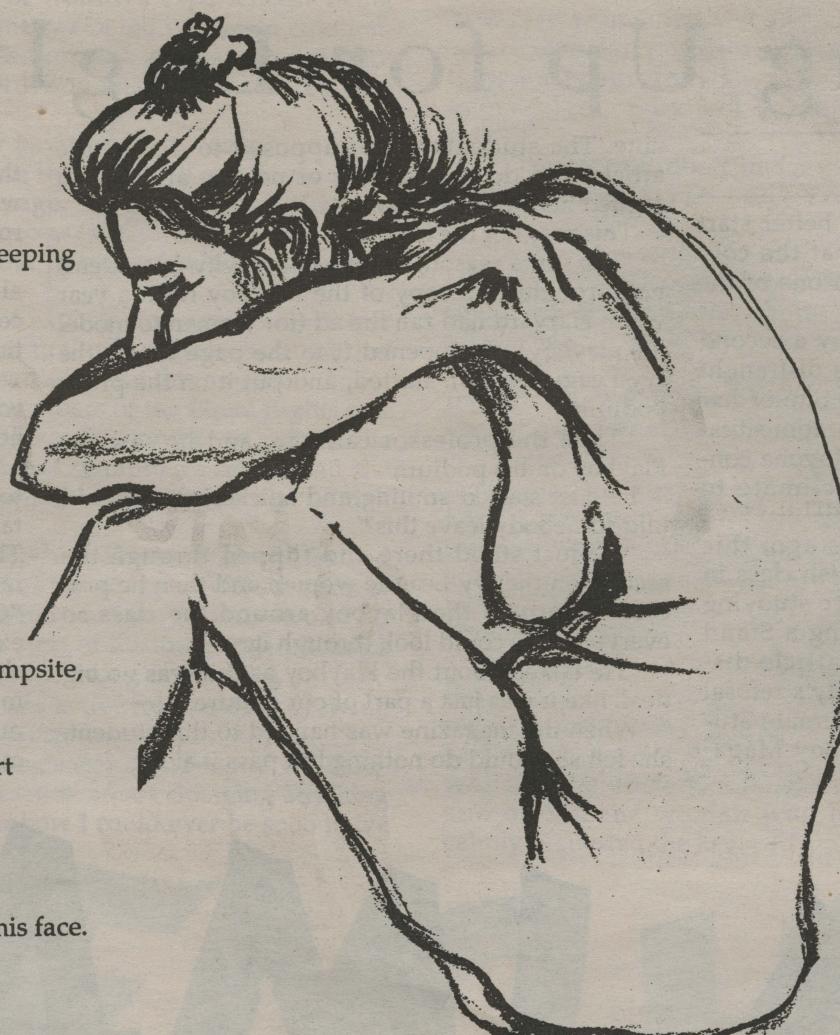
You imagined your father,  
Underwater,  
Circling the bait  
ready to snap.  
And tonight you imagine your lover with all his fingers,  
Pulling a line.

As soon as Nal took over for you,  
A green and gray fish with fins as fat  
As cigarette butts jumped, hooking itself.  
You remember the fish dying and gaping,  
Then throwing it back into the lake;  
Your fingers poking the fish  
To make it swim again  
And Nal picking it out of the lake,  
Hands cupping,  
Running back to the campsite,  
His feet licked with dirt,  
And placing the damp fish evenly  
Down on a stone the size of a grown-up's hand.

You remember petting and smoothing the fish  
Out while it clumsily breathed under your bitten fingers  
And you remember him finding a twig near  
The fire pit, propping the gills open,  
Shoving the bike pump in its mouth,  
Pushing down on the handle.

But on other nights,  
Your lover is like the fish out of water  
Because like a child, like a poem  
He starts inside of you.  
And just like a bike pump,  
You push and breathe into his ears  
And mouth until you hear the sound of his lips opening,  
The warm water,  
The struggle in his voice.

by Judy MacInnes Jr.



## You(all)

my brain drips;  
oozing in the seduction of the breeze.  
warm breath moving my hair to  
one side, kissing my neck  
flesh deeply.

drowning in the sensuality of the  
corner of Vancouver and Fairfield;  
my groceries the heavy sigh against  
the pillow of the pavement.

the sun's out-  
pleased i have  
coughed up some of the phlegm  
of our dis-eases.  
a cleaned-out cupboard of a soul.  
i am pleased to report  
the steady end to clogged arteries,  
gateway to my heart's content.

you (all) are ecstasy;  
mixed with suddenly  
warm sun afternoon in  
the season of rain.

i love them  
faces i take in my hands,  
hold close to my fingertips, close  
enough to caress  
on demand.

my loves are my thighs-  
intimate, inviting each other  
with sweat caresses,  
soaring in me,  
whisper in their beauty  
steel-toed how the world  
should have been.

toxic memories slide through  
my blood-red waterworks,  
coursing bravely, holding hostage  
my pin-pointed tales of ecstasy.

their muscle-bumped arms  
hold me to the light in the  
trick-mirror change room.  
i spy flattering curves, a toothy  
gaping smile-

the illusion is lost on me.

by rain heather margaret benson

# SWEET STOCK AND FOUR O'CLOCKS

In a romance novel  
I read of this heroine  
who wore  
Sweet stock and four o'clocks  
As her perfume.  
She bathed in it,  
Loved in it,  
Made this scent  
her essence,  
And men wanted her.

At the nursery today  
I bought  
Sweet stocks and four o'clocks,  
Little plants with purple and white flowers  
With spicy scents that made  
My nose itch.

My mother said  
To plant the flowers  
Outside my bedroom window:  
"You can smell them  
When they throw their perfume  
After the rains."

She doesn't know  
I lay in my single bed,  
Pulling the blanket over my skin  
And pretend it is another's touch,  
Wishing for my lover  
To come to me  
And be intoxicated.  
By my scent,  
Breathing in the heady notes  
Of sweet stock and four o'clocks  
As they drift  
Off my body.  
(1993)

Josephine Patten

*Wake Up Sweetheart,  
The Honeymoon Is Over  
(Confessions of a D.I.T.)*

Bootcamp's been a blast.  
K.D., HH Paisan, Susie Sexpert,  
take a bow.

\*

You instilled in me a pride I could  
strap around my chest like a  
cross - your - heart bra.

I have been seduced by your parlance  
and am coming out - of - the closet  
clad in baseball cap, leather, and toughlooking jeans.  
I take a bow

\*

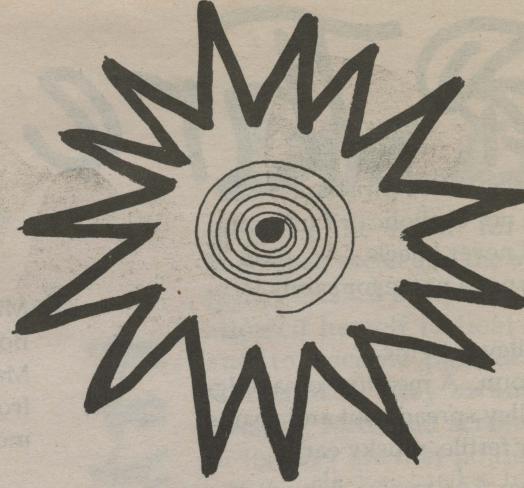
while stooping to scratch an itch I  
got somewhere between knitting with a  
friend and my first pool lesson. Lost in a  
pandemonium somewhere between  
theory and practice I scratch the itch until I feel both  
Pain and relief.

\*

I feel no need for tiresome diatribe. Outside my  
closet, I sit, knowing it's too late to go back in and afraid  
to move away.

By Christie Shaw

## Variations on a Theme



i can only cum by imagining a woman's blablablah descending towards my face i like sex with a man when am on top and in control i'd like that guy with the beautiful eyelashes to kiss me in the most boring places - like an elbow as well as the interesting ones i fantasize about having a group sex experience with strangers of both sexes i like my lover to lick myitoris and put his fingers in my vagina at the same time i like feeling my warmth between my fingers and my hair dangling over me i love having my skin on my back lightly stroked, licked, blown, scratched, rubbed really hard and my body held as though who holds it doesn't want to let go until i'm just ready to explode up and down my vulva to then suck on my clitoris and to do it over and over again very slowly i like to have sex in the morning while still in bed before facing the world - just wake up rules! i like cunnilingus i think one of the most intimate experiences i enjoy, the one that brings me as close to another woman's self as i've yet experienced, is clitoris to clitoris contact...i like slow sex in the hot tub i like to be on a soft towel in the tropics and have my entire body covered in whip cream and have a man and a woman slowly lick off the cream i would like to have oral sex with another woman outside in a field over a cliff and encompass all of the elements i would like fondling of my labia would like to be able to enjoy masses of nakedness (limited to two people) and the freedom (physical emotional space), and unlimited time to enjoy any and all of my partner's body i sometimes fantasize about being with more than one person sexually. i wish that this was not a sexual taboo because i don't think i would make this fantasy a reality i like a gentle tongue tracing my entire body

collectively written by Women's Studies 302  
Body, Language and Spirit  
writers: Cara, Deborah and Jacqueline

## After The Fact.

Will you come back to me with open hands  
When he has forgotten your name?  
Will you artlessly shrug, plead insanity,  
Then expect us to collapse  
Into Happily Ever After?  
Do you pick up the phone,  
Half-catching yourself dialing my number  
Then slam down the receiver?  
Will you gather all my things  
Fold them carefully into a  
Red-flowered box  
Like you have done with previous him's?  
Will you see beaches, hear songs  
Smell perfume and  
Think of me,  
And violently shake the thought out?  
Will you pick up my poems one day  
Read my words and hurt  
For what you gave up?  
Will you remember me  
After he has made you his?  
(1994)

Josephine Patten

Were Betty and Wilma really having a lesbian love affair while the boys were at the quarry?

# Three\* Names

Shelley is not christian.  
It is not Catholic or Lutheran  
and never kneels.  
It is not a name for saints.

Shelley is Celtic.  
A noun. A meadow on a ledge.  
Shelley spreads out and roams  
over fertile, musky earth.

Shelley is where the fires burned  
at Beltaine. She is restless, crying  
"What are the differences  
between a woman and a man?"

Shelley is always picking up her fire.  
Shelley is a name burned for its joy  
and its power.  
Shelley is a name  
Men and their bibles never understand

## What I Have to Say About Patriarchy

### A Poem for My Grandmother's Birthday

is that everyday at work  
I empty coffee cups down the drain  
scrub the bright lipstick  
of working women  
off of the rims  
I know whose cup is whose  
by the shade  
violent against the white ceramic  
in *Working Girl*, Melanie Griffith  
wears blinding eye shadow  
crushing pumps she trades for sneakers  
at the end of the day -  
with the help of a man  
she rises to a corporate office  
the camera moving, omnipresent  
to show the whole building  
her office window crammed in the centre  
sandwiched by everyone else  
how is this better than the lingerie,  
the crimping iron she cherished  
at the start of the film?  
After three years, I begin  
to wear lipstick again  
join the ranks of fighting women  
who blot and powder  
to make these colours ours  
to stay vibrant all day  
without losing shades of ourselves  
with our morning coffee.

by Adrienne Mercer

### Untitled

Not looking at me  
Doesn't help, you know.  
Fingers cannot retrace steps  
And forget  
They had ever been there.

My fingers often think  
Of your skin,  
And tremble  
At the remembrance.

But this doesn't mean  
They long  
For a return voyage.

So, rest safely and  
Look me in the eye-  
I'll try not to bite.  
(1993)

Josephine Patten

2. Maria, Marie  
Both are derived from  
Mary,  
from the Bible,  
meaning "bitter".

Maria carries prayer.  
Maria -hushed and  
drawn-  
the name hovers in  
the air  
of the cathedral.

Mary is a name for  
mass  
and wooden pews.  
Cold, crucifix, wine.

Maria is a name that  
hurries.  
Grasping prayer.  
Clutching rosaries.

Maria is rich smelling.  
She is always cook-  
ing.  
Mary is never whole.  
Her heart, her body,  
her soul  
belong to others.

3. Motz is blunt.  
Definite.  
The O is pronounced  
long and full and  
round.

It is a strong name  
like the women  
who have possessed  
it.

# Absence

Her fingers slide, slick  
Across his wax skin,  
Marred with goosebumps.  
She traces his veins, mapped  
Below numbed skin.

Her words prod, rough  
Against his restless head.  
Opaque emotions flow through  
His locked thoughts, guarded  
Below numbed skin.

Her words prod, rough  
Against his restless head.  
Opaque emotions flow through  
His locked thoughts, guarded  
By wearied distrust.

She listens, distraught,  
Over a quiet chest.  
Ear against candle body,  
She seeks a beat from his carbon heart.

She puts her wrist to her ear, searching for a  
pulse.

-by Gwendolyn Richards



## Homage to Barbie

Hail to thee, Blonde Barbie—  
Goddess of Womanly Perfection:  
white skin gently bronzed by a sun in an eye-blue sky that has never heard  
of ozone depletion  
or melanoma;  
smooth skin wrinkle free, perpetually youthful  
creased only by two dimples  
created by straight white never-rotting teeth  
framed by lovely lips curved in  
unceasingly pleasing smile...

In the tremors of my youth I knelt before you pleading—  
Pick me, pick me  
to devour and make over in your deal divine image.  
creased only by two dimples  
created by straight white never-rotting teeth  
framed by lovely lips curved in  
unceasingly pleasing smile...

In the tremors of my youth I knelt before you pleading—  
Pick me, pick me  
to devour and make over in your deal divine image.

(I was six.  
Your bosomy gracefulness decorated the front of my ballet case  
with the uncomfotting assurance that I would  
never  
attain equality or near it.  
I knew even then that I was not a Chosen One.)

Oh, Incomparable Barbie  
Against whose perfection all mortal girls are measured:  
36-24-36 at most, or diet, do breast enlarging exercises  
practice the latest makeup techniques for for hiding acne  
and pray a lot because  
"miracles do happen"  
and your prince might come anytime so you must look your best"  
(I know that is why you Barbie always stand on tiptoe,  
hips slightly forward,  
shoulders back  
ready to be admired.)

As my plump breasts grew I prayed to you harder  
Oh, Barbie, only let me be like you  
and I too will always smile  
always be pleasant and happy  
ask for nothing but adoration  
be content

Barbie, I found you nestled between the pages of Seventeen magazine  
with your friends Twiggy and Susan Dey  
I knew you lived somewhere far away from here  
in a wonderful house next door to Nancy Drew.

Over and over you remake yourself Barbie.  
Creator and Destroyer of women,  
Purveyor of Attainable Perfection, Aching Needful Desire  
You have devoured me wholly.

Now in Vogue and Cosmopolitan and Sports Illustrated swim-  
suit issue  
you cavort with Christie Brinkley, Kate Moss, Cindy Crawford,  
Vandela  
show me how it should look, how it should be done—  
Barbies, you are all too far away to hear my murmured plead-  
ings  
I dare not speak aloud for if you hear you will surely  
look on me with horror and pity  
as I look on myself when I imagine I am you.

by Helen Rezanowich

Why did Mr. Dress - up make his son live in a tree house?

# OPEN

Your black eyes are so open  
the sleek ease of your words  
this sweet, lazy day in the sun with James when  
i first met you.  
And yet i felt afraid of you then,  
why?  
Shaila; Zavalan, James introduces us  
and you just smile and gaze at me  
And stir your tea.  
And speak of India where your mother lives,  
the ancient rainforest, your call, and  
the rent money you desperately need. It's funny  
when you live day by beautiful day  
you say.  
And i just sit quietly clumsy  
in my awe.  
So that autumn i wish to go  
on the Walk in support of the rights  
of wild and sustainable livelihoods, a long hike  
from the rainforest where lived Qwa-ba-da-wah  
through close-weaved logging communities, and finally  
"Victoria"  
You are in my car ride up there.  
We sit together in the back  
singing the blues of the chainsaw.  
You show me your library book about midwifery  
and say you wonder what it's like to give birth  
I say i do not ever want a baby how  
you breathe that neither do you yet then you reveal  
are in cycle with the birth of the moon while  
the two men in the front  
squabble over the map.  
You stick a book with a picture  
of a pregnant womyn  
in their laps,  
while i look out the window and only wish  
i could timidly whisper i was born  
in the primordial ocean  
oh, the tides i so long to seek you Shaila  
of your knowledge of their  
rhythms

Now by the fire  
the moments edge between the forest  
and the gravel we exchange our mispronounced words my smmagess  
as massages and churkeys as turkeys and your sirrisillium as  
curriculum  
And you share with me that you spent grade eleven and twelve  
on a farm  
"What a fucking condo spider's web"  
you say and i turn to see a glint in the  
moonlight.  
With the gentleness and your smile, you add  
"But condos don't look so good"

Chortling cold into sleeping bags to  
awake you beckon me to a  
morning swim in the river under November snow  
still asleep in the moss beds of limb

oh you wise ancient cedar  
i know you feel at ease with her insight  
why do not i, oh the need  
i must in time  
let go of  
my silence

We are the stragglers of the group  
as we walk barefoot over the long logging roads  
stumps, like in the photos, stretching to the horizon.  
Your long black hair and eyelashes shine  
with the black charcoal of the burnt slash piles and  
you tromp into the tree farm to collect a little lungwort  
bulbous light green, pale as my face  
in the stark sun.  
You tell me treading lightly, you are not with Mark anymore  
he said you were too fat  
I spontaneously guffaw  
and we talk of the tea we will soon make  
to soothe our lungs and  
i suddenly feel a strong sense  
i do know  
i can speak;  
"the corporate media  
pesticide  
Perversion! Monocropping our minds!"  
but i still feel helpless in this desolate landscape.



I was with James again  
Winter now we came to your house you share with others  
we sit cross legged, you across from me wearing a shirt  
you had painted a naked womyn entrapped in a twisting  
tree

her feet with roots into the soil around your waist  
and you tell me  
you pose for drawing classes  
as our fingers mold the wet wax in a bulbed candle  
at our feet  
you are so comfortable and  
i catch on and when you ask me  
"Do you want to make lavender salves sometime?"  
i feel all earthy colours and i say "Yeah!"  
and i blurt out my dream to have a bee hive  
and trade candles for manure to grow  
peas and you bend over and give me a hug  
But still when we for a walk  
to the Dallas road beach  
i can only stand when your knees  
nestle down into the wet sand and you  
whisper to the moon.

Why do i always feel someone is watching  
me?  
What's this inhibition when my fingers  
so long to press down, feel this earth?  
If it's perversion why is it stopping me?  
Why is it shutting me up?

So i do suddenly drop down beside you and we gaze  
at the dance of light on sensuous waves and then  
i am crying for i do not feel  
the distinction any longer  
your beauty extends out and i  
am encircled within

we sing to the horizon  
i and you, oh  
Goddess, oh  
encircled  
my curved back now moonlit too,  
i then rise from the sand and dance  
by myself



As she danced with  
her sister, the mother goddess,  
she recounted the tale of her  
life. She sang of how she had  
been broken and destroyed as  
a girlchild - watching piece by  
piece stolen from her in the  
night, until the image was so  
distorted that all that could be  
seen through the sea of salt  
and blood was a great ocean of  
much pain. And it was when  
the mirrors were finally clear  
in front of her that they had  
cracked and smashed to her  
feet, and a scattering had  
begun, sucking her into the  
darkness and only much pain.  
And it was when the mirrors  
were finally clear in front of  
her that they had cracked and  
smashed to her feet, and a scat-  
tering had begun, sucking her  
into the darkness and only  
muck later spiraling her back  
to a new light. So it was after  
the coming together that she  
had begun to try to make sense  
of it all, taking pieces from  
other puzzles that she had  
known existed, but had forgot-  
ten were available to her. And  
amidst much fear she had tried  
to make the images true to  
who she was and to crate her-  
self in her own image, know-  
ing that she could be whole on  
her own. So she allowed her-  
self to experience her own

by Poppy Murdle



# DANCED

them by the wind, for she  
knew their secret and the beau-  
ty they masked inside. And she  
allowed herself to float free  
and to become part of the  
waterfall as they swam in,  
bursting forth and screaming  
in its fury for life; pounding  
out the old colour and receiv-  
ing the new. And the woman  
began to love the image of the  
butterfly and to cherish it, so  
that she began to adorn herself  
in gold and purple and her  
blood flowed red in her shared  
indignation of her beloved but-  
terfly's cagedness. An although  
she was not bound to the but-  
terfly, she knew that she could  
never be free, knowing it lived  
in chains. So she began to live  
in her own image, to free the  
butterfly and to get closer to  
loving herself. And as she  
looked into the pool of tears  
she had always turned her eyes  
from, swimming before her in  
the pieces of jagged mirror that  
slit her own wrists and cut her  
feet, she saw for the first time  
her own wings, golden and  
streaming, flowing behind her,  
but flecked with red. And she  
knelt down and drank herself  
in, and the singing voices of  
the women became louder and  
clearer and she was finally able  
to hear their words. And the  
cage fell away and the but-  
terfly hovered around her, its  
wings brushing gently across  
her cheeks and eyelashes and it  
drank from her tears, and the  
red around its heart began to  
shrink and ebb away. But the  
woman stopped its final  
ebbing and said to it, "Do not  
give away all your red, for in it  
are your memories, and it  
serves as a testimony to your  
song and pain, and only  
through the red can you see  
how brilliant the purple really  
is, and estimate the worth of  
your flecks of gold." So the  
butterfly kept all her colours as  
a tribute to herself and to the  
woman, and all other women,  
no matter what form they  
come in. And so honour the  
goddess, who had led her to  
the questions, and to remem-  
ber what she and the butterfly  
had lost and gained, the  
woman claimed the colour red  
as her own and refused to keep  
her pain invisible. And the  
woman embraced her ebbing  
and flowing redness, as testi-  
mony to the scars she had kept  
hidden and harboured inside,  
and as a vision of her strength  
and courage to all who were  
willing to see and listen. And  
in a gust of warm summer  
wind, that swirled with dande-  
lion puffs and butterflies, she  
let go of her own cage, to float  
over golden fields of sparkling  
blue, and to love the single yel-  
low flower that circled and spi-  
raled within her, and had  
always been there, but had  
never had the chance to bloom.  
by Nancy Patterson

What was Finnegan really saying to Casey?

# Respecting Women's Bodies

by anonymous

I am writing this article for several reasons: firstly to provide information about the most common sexually transmitted disease in America and its various treatments.

Secondly: to spread the message that as women we have a right to be informed about and choose what medical treatments are performed on our bodies.

Finally, I want to share my own experience in the hope that I can prevent it from happening to other women.

Genital warts. These are two words with the most unappealing sound, especially in combination with one another. Genital warts are caused by the human papillomavirus (HPV), similar to the type that causes common skin warts.

There are over twenty types of HPV that cause invisible infections, warts or flat lesions in the genital area. The disease is most often spread through sexual intercourse with an

infected partner, and while a condom can provide some protection, warts can be on and spread to areas other than the shaft of the penis.

Somewhere between fifty and sixty percent of our sexually active student population will have come into contact with the warts, although probably only ten percent of those will develop visible warts. The symptoms of the warts usually appear between three weeks and eight months after exposure.

The female vagina is the most sensitive part of the female body. As it is warm and moist it is the ideal place for the growth of warts, and a woman is therefore likely to develop warts before a man does. The visible genital warts look like regular warts, starting as small, painless, hard spots that often appear on the bottom of the vaginal opening, but can also occur on the labia, vulva, inside the vagina, on the cervix, or around the anus.

Diagnosis of warts is usually

made by direct visual exam, but may also be indicated by an abnormal Pap smear. On a man the warts usually occur on the head or shaft of the penis, but they can also be on the scrotum or inside the penis and can be spread through the excretion of seminal fluids.

So there's the information about the disease, now for my own story. I was personally horrified when I discovered I had genital warts, especially when I heard there are some connections between HPV-caused lesions on the cervix and cervical cancer. After three different treatments, none of which were especially painful, I am rid of the warts and I have realized they are really not that big a deal. None of the connections to cervical cancer are anything more than "associations".

What is a big deal is that I am three weeks pregnant and the treatment I had done just over a week ago was an exceptionally toxic one: podophyllin. It is absorbed by the skin and can cause birth defects or even fetal death. When I went to

Health Services and had the podophyllin solution used on me, I told the doctor that a condom had broken during sex and I asked for an early pregnancy blood test form. I was not told of any of the effects of podophyllin on a fetus or myself. I was told by another doctor, after I confirmed the pregnancy, that there was a case of a young child getting some podophyllin on his arm in a doctor's office and the child later died as a result.

My partner and I are now both furious. I wonder if the doctor who used the podophyllin either presumed I wasn't pregnant, or if s/he presumed I would not keep a child if I was. Either way the choice of keeping or not keeping this pregnancy has been taken from me and my partner by the actions of that doctor. And this is the main reason for me writing this article - I do not want this to happen to anyone else.

According to The New Our Bodies, Ourselves, podophyllin

is what is most often prescribed by practitioners. Trichloroacetic acid (TCA) is currently used by a smaller number of practitioners although it appears to be better than podophyllin in several respects. TCA's strength is more easily controlled and stops acting after about five minutes, whereas podophyllin must be washed off hours later and has the danger of causing chemical burns.

Dry ice (cryotherapy) or acid can freeze or burn off smaller warts. Surgery or electrodesiccation (using an electrical current to destroy tissue) may be necessary for larger warts that don't respond to other treatments.

Other treatments include a 5-fluorouracil cream, which may cause some irritation and discomfort, and laser therapy.

Obviously, much more information can be found on the topic, from some well informed doctors at Health Services, and from literature.

Between my partner and I, we have heard a number of very different stories from various medical staff. Remember, you do not have to accept the answers of any single person. As Our Bodies, Ourselves states: "In a medical setting, your most important right is to control what happens to your body." This includes being informed about what is being planned, the risks and potential benefits, and alternative treatments including the option of no treatment at all.

For consent to be truly informed, you must understand everything that is being explained. Ask as many questions as you have, and do not allow yourself to be rushed into any sort of treatment if it is not an emergency.

As a staff member of a feminist clinic expressed, "I wish women could walk into any medical facility feeling that we deserve to be treated with respect and demanding it when it isn't there. We should stop feeling grateful every time we are not overtly abused."

*Writing ...continued from page 5*

Brenda who "has just eaten/ a stuffed potato three donuts /and downed an Orange Julius, /and now she's in the washroom.../emptying the creamy mixture into the john."

Swannell does not editorialize Brenda's purging yet the echo is blatantly loud: the mall is the result of the beauty culture, but also a cause.

Another woman was reading immediately after Dargatz and Swannell. After a quick jog across campus to the Clearihue Building and a scramble to find the right room, some of the audience of the earlier reading found themselves in front of Lola Lemire Tostevin.

She is a celebrated (and sometimes termed postmodern) author, invited to the English Department by Smaro Kamboureli. Tostevin was reading from her new book, *Frog Moon*.

One chapter, "The Iron Horse," is an interesting parallel to Gilbert and Gulbar's *Angel in the House*. Tostevin's three-generational depiction of women's work arises from a grandmother figure. The grandma was an angel who "never complained, worked around the clock."

The narrator is the granddaughter, and she describes her own mother. The mother, although committed to a lifetime of drudgery, draws the line at making bread: "(The grandmother made bread) What did it get her? Clickity-clack, clickity-clack, break you grandma's back."

The refrain is haunting, as the grandmother is dead. And "I don't know how many times I heard my (grandma) worked herself to death and that made her an angel."

The struggle to break patterns is eloquently drawn in this piece.

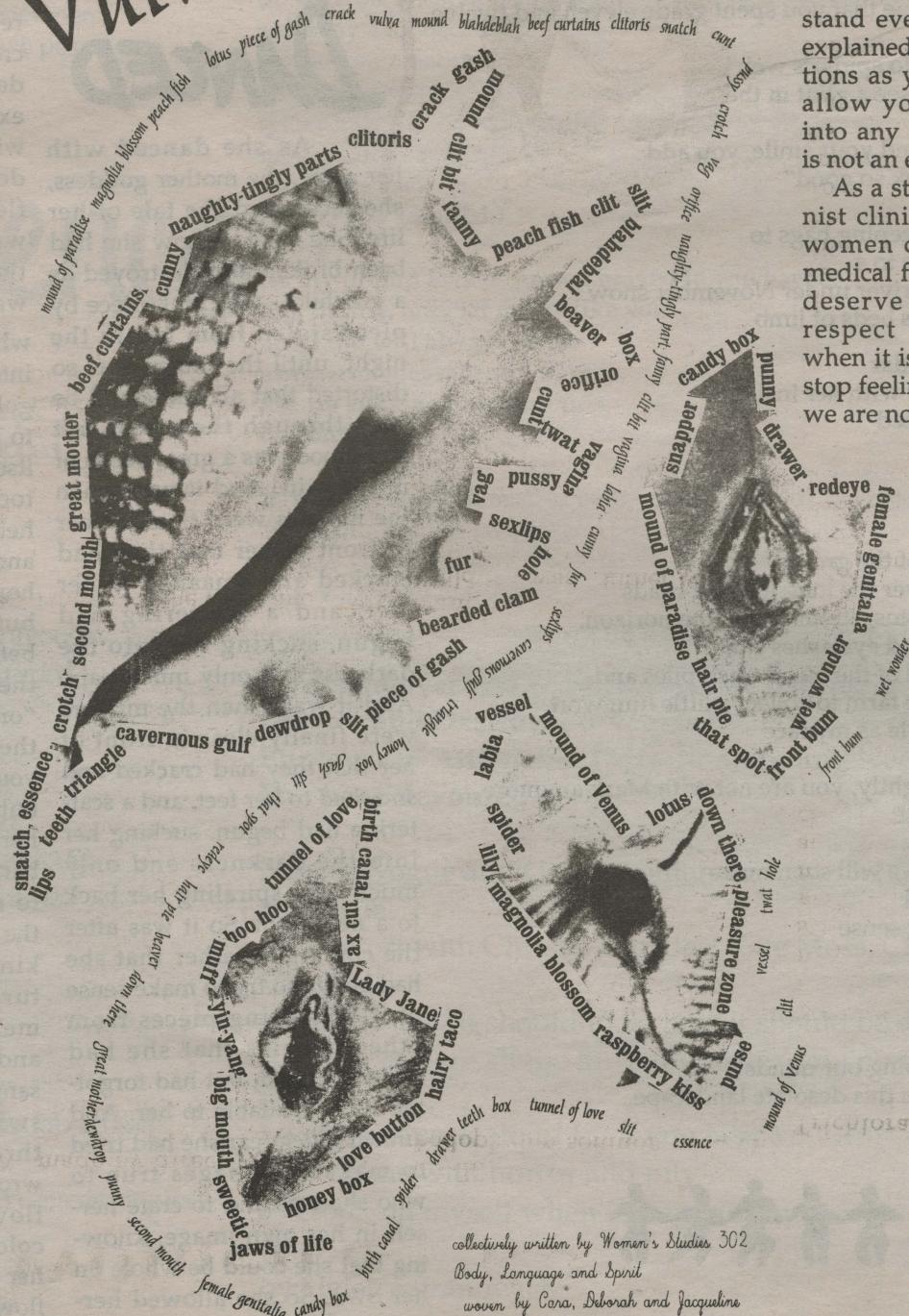
In another chapter, requested by Kamboureli, the narrator is Cree. Tostevin deftly steps around the issue of appropriation by stating that this piece is an "exchange of culture...I don't believe in appropriating whole cultures (whole stories)...on the other hand, I have my own guidelines. (I don't find I censor myself)...(But) I would hope that I would be sensitive (to the issues)."

This story is an elegant portrayal of one controlling culture endeavoring to swallow another culture: the narrator "was weaned" from her original language, that of Cree. It also boasts a rewrite - Tostevin stands the bible on its head: "In the beginning was the frog."

Dargatz stated earlier in the day that writing is organic, it grows out of the writer's experience.

The presence of these writers, and the women that brought them into the spotlight while they themselves stood in the wings, is proof of growth. It is proof of the changes that women are carving in the signposts at every corner of our history and our present. \*

## Vulvations



collectively written by Women's Studies 302  
Body, Language and Spirit  
woven by Cora, Deborah and Jacqueline

How large a wardrobe did Ginger bring for a three hour cruise anyway?